

The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, August 18. 1694.

Quest. 1. **I**D fire to know whether it be lawful for a man to cry down his Wife when she was in Debt before he marry'd her, and deny'd it when put to her; and continues to run him so far in debt that he is not able to pay it? Or whether he mayn't lawfully leave her, if he daily goes in danger of a Prison through her Extravagance and Drunkenness?

Ans. Poor Man! How will the good Husbands presently sympathise with him, and make his case their own? They'll all cry he has hard Fortune to be plagu'd with such an extravagant Drunken Wife, but who pities the poor Wives; Ten to one that are helpt up with fits of Husbands. Thus we have been as kind as possible to the Ladies, but after all we must do Justice. Our opinion is, that had the Woman only represented her Fortune better than they really were, to get a good Husband, tho she was therein imprudent and criminal, and ne'retheless so, because 'tis so common a thing in the other sex, yet had this been all, it had been no reason at all for parting with her, when once they had been together for better or worse. 'Tis true, if she's so dreadfully extravagant as the poor man complains, and there's no gentler way to reclaim her, or prevent his ruine, he can't be blam'd if he should proceed to either of those Extremities he mentions.

Quest. 2. Whether 'twas a sin in Noah to curse his Son Ham for discovering his Nakedness?

Ans. Had he curs'd him without any cause, doubtless it had been a sin. But there was not only a great occasion for't, but besides, Noah spake as a Judge, by his Patriarchal Authority, and more, as a Prophet, and immediately commission'd by God to declare his Vengeance against the offender. Therefore not to be drawn into practice now by any Parent, since none can be in the like Circumstances.

Quest. 3. A woman left her Husband, and marry'd another, and after his Death a third; at which she's now troubled. Qu. Whether she ought to live with him, as with her Husband?

Ans. Not unless she's sure her former Husband is dead, unless she'll venture to live in continu'd Adultery.

Quest. 4. I unhappily fell into an Opinion that the Worship of the Church of England was unlawful, and thereupon made a Vow to forsake her Communion; but being since convinc'd of the Fallieness of that Opinion, beg your Judgment whether the Vow be binding or not?

Ans. If the matter of the Vow were either good or indifferent, you'd be oblig'd by it. But being unlawful, as it must needs be to forsake the Communion of a Church which you have no just Reason to forsake, the Vow is of it self void; though you are solemnly to ask pardon for your Rashness in making it.

Quest. 5. I courted a Gentlewoman; but some time after finding myself very much behind-hand in the World, I acquainted her with my condition. She being in a way to live very well by her own Industry; and thinking me honest, made me a promise to marry me whenever I could make my self even in the World, though I was not worth a Groat. But it being probable this will not be done in haste, she begins to be weary of her promise. I desire your Judgment whether she's oblig'd by it?

Ans. Yes doubtless, because 'twas voluntary; and besides 'twas made on so good an account that 'tis pity it should be broken, if 'twere but for fear of discouraging such a sort of Honesty, whereof we have but too

few Examples. However, if there's no likelihood of your ever getting into such Circumstances as she has made the Conditions of your Marriage, or not doing it under a long time, it would be generous in you to release her of her promise; though unless you do so, she can't, we think, get free from it, Obligation.

Quest. 6. I've had an affection for a virtuous young Lady for these two years, but have not seen her this year and half, being at a great distance from her. I never dissipated my Passion till within these Four Months. I've always continued constant to her, not having had the least thoughts of any other: Yet about Nine Months since I courted another Lady, whom I could not lose, merely for Diversion, who accepted of my Courtship; and I thereupon promised her Marriage: However, I'm assur'd my Friends won't consent to it, her Fortune being far inferior to mine; though the former Lady's is equal, and I am assur'd of my Friends Consent; besides, my own Inclinations being still fixed on her only: Qu. Whether I may not break my promise with her to whom I have so great an Affection, and marry the other, whom I still so passionately love?

Ans. First, you must ask the Lov'd Lady whether she'll have you, and Secondly, the Lady that's hated, whether she will part with you, for your Declaration to the former do's not amount to a promise, and therefore can't clear you from the latter; whom if you forsake, without her consent, and marry the other, you can't expect to live happy. For tho men fancy Heaven laugh at Lovers Perjuries, or do's not at all regard 'em, we know no priviledg they have to be forsworn any more than others. Nay, there's little doubt but the Crime is as much greater than 'tis in Civil Cases, or matter of right between man and man, as 'tis a more pardonable Injury to rob any person of something that's but of small Value, than of their Quiet, and Fame, and probably, all the Happiness of their Lives. The Examples of which are so frequent that one would think the credulous sex should take more care whom they believed, and neither be imposed upon by their own Vanity, nor the Oaths of their faithless Lovers.

Quest. 7. Why is the Devil called Lucifer, son of the Morn, &c. And yet elsewhere the Prince of Darkeness?

Ans. There's no difficulty at all in this, the former name relates to his first Estate, when one of the principal Angels, who are called Morning-stars. The latter, to his present miserable condition, when reserved in Chains of Darkeness.

Quest. 8. What's the Reason that when a Bell is casting, if any one speaks it spoils the sound?

Ans. If the Fact be true, it must be from the motion of the Air by the Voice, which it seems affects the Bell when 'tis in that tender condition, and striking on it not equally, may make some alteration in the Pores of the metal, which are then a forming, whereby the Bell is rendered less tuneable and harmonious.

Quest. 9. If a man do an action which he's really perswaded he ought to do, nay, thinks that he sins if he do's it not; suppose now that this action be in it self sinful, Qu. whether it be a sin to him, since he did it with a good Intention, and on the contrary, if an action be good in it self, and yet a man thinks he sins if he do's it, Qu. whether 'tis not a sin to him?

Ans. If the Intention alone would excuse an ill action, as Hobbs, and the Jesuits believe, then those would be blameless who murdered the Apostles, because Christ himself has said that when they Kil'd them they'd think they

they did God good service. This would excuse the *Inquisitors* in other Countryes, the persecuters in *Queen Marys* days; in ours, the *Irish* and *Parisian* *Massacres*, and all the *Catholick* or *Enthusiastick* *Designs* and *Villains* that ever have been contriv'd or committed, since there's no reason to doubt but many of those *Miscreants* engag'd in 'em, concluded what they did was extremely meritorious, and so acceptable to God that for the same they were to pass strait to Heaven, and so on the contrary, if any man neglects a certain duty, even tho he thinks 'tis his Duty to neglect it, for Example, humanity, or Compassion in the foregoing Instances, neither can this any more excuse him nor any thing else but such an Ignorance as is wholly invincible.

Quest. 10. If our first Parents had not fallen, whether then 'twould have been impossible for them or any of their Children to have been burnt, poisoned, stabbed, devoured by wild Beasts, or to have dyed by any disease or misfortune?

Ans. The sacred writings assure us, that by sin Death enter'd into the World, and the punishment of Death threatned by God on our first Parents Disobedience, had been perfect mockery, had it not suppos'd they should not have dyed had they continued obedient. That which makes the Soul it self immortal is that it cannot be dissolved, or destroyed by any inward disorder, because not made of jarring Elements, nor any outward Violence, neither from matter, because that's an Inferior Rank of Being, and cannot at all act on Spirit, when separated from it; and besides 'tis not made of parts, and so is not dissolvable, nor yet by spirit it self, unless him that is infinite, there being no way to dissolve a Spirit, that we can have any notion of, besides annihilation, which requires at least as great a power as Creation, and therefore an Infinite: And as the Soul has this as its own nature, so the Body would have had qualitys something like it, had our first Parents continued in their Innocency. The Body of man was doubtless perfect, in its kind, when it came newly out of the Hand of God, molested with no diseases, tho its true, made up of different Qualitys, which might in time make a Combustion, and act one upon another, if not restrained in their just Temperament. But this might have been done by the eating of the Tree of Life, of which God himself speaks, as if the eating thereof would have made them live for ever, the only true noble Elixir, which we now in vain study for, which was to have been both the Sacrament, and real cause, or Instrument of Immortality. This would have secur'd our First Parents from within; and from without, what should harm them, when they were Lords of the Creation, and could have no Enemy? There are Arts common enough, whereby we now can handle fire, or walk over it unhurt, can drink the strongest poisons without any fear or danger, and could not God have done as much for us as we for our selves? As for stabbing, who should do it, when all mankind had been at Peace both with themselves and one another? So that there's no need to suppose men invulnerable in order to their being immortal, and for any accidents, either Gods immediate providence, or the Guardianship and converse of his blessed Ministers the *Holy Angels* might either have altogether prevented them, or the all-healing Tree have as soon cur'd them as they had happen'd, or human prudence it self, which would then have been much clearer, and sharper sighted, have foreseen, and avoided 'em. And if our First-Parents had been thus immortal, what less than immortal must that Off-spring have been which had proceeded from them?

This Week was Published,

The WORKS of the Right Honourable Henry late Lord Delamere, and Earl of Warrington, being Thirty Two Original Manuscripts, Written with his Lordship's Own Hand; The Contents whereof are as follows, *Viz.*

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